

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Altrincham 1

TWO early goals by Howard Kettleborough were enough to earn a makeshift Wycombe Wanderers side a narrow victory over FA Trophy semi-finalists Altrincham in Friday evening's friendly (writes Stuart Earp).

Wanderers, fielding two newcomers from Loughborough College — Steve Vass and Neil Wheeldon — who will tour with the Blues to Italy, went ahead with a finely worked goal in the first 60 seconds. Ian Pearson found Steve Hill who beat full-back Mick Brooke before crossing low. Kettleborough swept the ball home first time.

Altrincham replied strongly with surging runs from their strong centre-forward Tony Webber but it was the Blues who scored next when Kettleborough made it 2-0 after 24 minutes. Allan's back pass was fumbled by goalkeeper Cavanagh and 'Kets' tucked the ball into the net from a narrow angle.

Wycombe, with Paul Birdseye, Bob Davies and Bill Roberts looking solid at the back, were in control until half-time while the visitors seemed to be suffering from playing a Northern Premier League match the previous evening.

Hill and Mick Holifield went close early in the second half while Cavanagh saved well from Pearson, who otherwise had an off night.

Youngster Steve Reed came on at centre-back in the 70th minute and suffered the nightmare experience of giving away a

goal with virtually his first touch of the ball. He failed to spot Steve Mackay lurking dangerously when he sent a pass back to John Maskell and the substitute nipped in to slot the ball home.

The other Loughborough lads took time to settle but showed plenty of aggression and a will to come forward.

Altrincham had Wanderers under pressure in the closing stages but the brilliant form of Davies at centre-back lept them at bay. Bob's timing was perfect on Friday and it could be that he has found his position of the future at centre-back.

It took one of Maskell's saves of the season to keep the scoreline at 2-1 when he somehow got a hand to Graham Heathcote's thunderous drive in the closing stages.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle (sub J. Maskell 45 mins); W. Roberts, R. Davies, P. Birdseye, S. Vass; N. Wheeldon, J. Priestley (sub S. Reed 70 mins), M. Holifield; I. Pearson (sub D. Evans 70 mins), H. Kettleborough, S. Hill.

ALTRINCHAM: T. Cavanagh; A. Bannister, M. Brooke, S. Allan, D. Peel; R. Allen (sub S. Mackay 50 mins), I. Morris, J. Davison; A. Webber, M. Moore, G. Heathcote.

Referee: P. Wrennell (Burnham).
Half-time: 2-0. **Goalscorers,** Wycombe: Kettleborough 2 (1, 24). Altrincham: Mackay (72).